

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY MANILA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2074

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EA ALSO FOR AMBASSADOR NEWSOM

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SHUM, RP

SUBJECT: MANILA PRESS COMMENTS ON DEPARTMENT'S HUMAN RIGHTS
REPORT AND OAKLEY TESTIMONY

1. SUMMARY: WEEKEND NEWS REPORTS FROM WASHINGTON ON PHILIPPINE EMBASSY'S REBUTTAL TO DEPARTMENT'S HUMAN RIGHTS REPORT, COUPLED WITH REPORTS ON OAKLEY'S HIRC TESTIMONY, HAVE PRODUCED A SPATE OF INCREASINGLY SHRILL EDITORIAL ATTACKS IN MANILA DAILIES. CURRENT RANGE OF COMMENT CONCENTRATES PRIMARILY ON U.S. "INTERFERENCE" IN APRIL 7 ELECTIONS, BUT COVERS SPECTRUM FROM HUMAN RIGHTS POLICY TO ARMS SALES. BULLETIN TODAY IS SILENT SO FAR. DAILY EXPRESS IS RELATIVELY MILD, SEEING ELECTIONS AS OPPORTUNITY TO REFUTE "A DELUGE OF BASELESS ALLEGATIONS, INNUENDOS, AND OUTRIGHT LIES," BUT ALSO COMPLAINING THAT U.S. IS "A BIT TOO INTERESTED IN POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS HERE." TIMES JOURNAL CLAIMS DEPARTMENT "SPENDS MILLIONS TO RAKE THE SKELETONS IN THE CLOSETS OF OTHER NATIONS" AND IS "TRYING TO DICTATE THE ROUTE WE HAVE TO TAKE. GRANADA IN TIMES JOURNAL CALLS DEPARTMENT REPORT "ONE OF THE MOST COCKEYED EVER SUBMITTED." FRANCISCO DE LEON IN TIMES JOURNAL SEES "CONTRADICTIONS" BETWEEN RECENT STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR NEWSOM THAT U.S. ISN'T "THE WORLD'S
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SCORE-KEEPER" ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND DEPARTMENT REPORT WHICH "DID EXACTLY THE OPPOSITE." EVENING POST COMPLAINS THAT DEPARTMENT REPORT WAS "ADDLED," AND "OUT OF TOUCH WITH REALITY." END SUMMARY

2. FOLLOWING ARE EXCERPTS FROM THESE COMMENTS:

3. DAILY EXPRESS FEBRUARY 19: QUOTE: ...AMERICAN CONCERN FOR THE CONDUCT AND IMPLICATIONS OF THE INTERIM BATASANG PAMBANSA ELECTIONS ON THE PHILIPPINE POLITICAL SITUATION IS CLEARLY REFLECTED IN THE RATHER EXTRA FOCUS BEING GIVEN BY THE WESTERN PRESS ON LOCAL ISSUES AND DEVELOPMENTS, AND IN THE SEEMINGLY VARIOUS REPORTS AND HEARINGS BEING CONDUCTED IN THE U.S. STATE DEPARTMENT AND CONGRESS. ... FOR SOME TIME NOW, PARTICULARLY SINCE THE ENUNCIATION OF THE CARTER CRUSADE ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND THE RENEGOTIATIONS OF RP-US BASES AND ECONOMIC AGREEMENTS, THE WATCHFUL EYE OF AMERICAN OFFICIALS HAS BORNE DOWN THE MARTIAL LAW ADMINISTRATION. ALLEGATIONS OF VIOLATIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE PHILIPPINES HAVE EVEN BEEN AIRED AND PROPOSALS FORWARDED TO CUT OFF OR LESSEN AMERICAN AID TO THIS COUNTRY. ... THE APRIL 7 ELECTIONS AND THE CAMPAIGN PERIOD PRIOR TO THE POLLS PROVIDE AN OPPORTUNITY TO REFUTE WHAT HAS BEEN A DELUGE OF BASELESS ALLEGATIONS, INNUENDOS, AND OUTRIGHT LIES AGAINST THE MARTIAL LAW ADMINISTRATION. NOT THAT OUR MOVES MUST EMANATE FROM WHAT THE U.S. BELIEVES WE SHOULD DO; RATHER, WE CAN SHOW TO THE WORLD THAT WE NEED NOT BE TOLD BECAUSE WE BELIEVE IN THE SAME PRINCIPLE OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND DEMOCRACY. UNQUOTE.

4. DOROY VALENCIA IN DAILY EXPRESS FEBRUARY 19: QUOTE: THE U.S. STATE DEPARTMENT TOLD THE U.S. CONGRESS THAT THE COMING BATASAN ELECTIONS IN THE PHILIPPINES IS A STEP IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION THAT COULD LEAD TO BETTER THINGS IN DUE TIME. NO LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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WONDER THE KNOWN WORSHIPPERS OF AMERICAN THINKING ARE EITHER RUNNING OR SUPPORTING CANDIDATES IN THIS POLITICAL EXERCISE. THE STATE DEPARTMENT ALSO PRAISED THE CALIBER OF THE OPPOSITION TICKETS. THE BOYCOTT IDEA DID NOT SEEM TO SIT WELL WITH THE STATE DEPARTMENT -- NO WONDER ADVOCATES OF THE BOYCOTT ARE THERE SWINGING. UNQUOTE.

5. TIMES JOURNAL EDITORIAL OF FEBRUARY 21 (COMMENTING ON U.S. ARMS SALES TO BOTH ISRAEL AND ARAB COUNTRIES): QUOTE: AMERICAN TRY TO GIVE THE APPEARANCE THAT THEY ARE THE MOST SELF-RIGHTWOU'S PEOPLE ON THIS EARTH. THEY DECRY RACIAL DISCRIMINATION IN SOUTH AFRICA AND SUPPOSED VIOLATIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN MANY ASIAN COUNTRIES. BUT THEY CONVENIENTLY

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IGNORE THESE SAME FAULTS IN THEIR OWN COUNTRY. EVERY YEAR, THE STATE DEPARTMENT SPEND MILLIONS OF DOLLARS TO RAKE THE SKELETONS IN THE CLOSETS OF OTHER NATIONS. AMERICANS PREACH PEACE IN EVERY NOOK AND CORNER OF THE WORLD, ADMONISH OTHERS AGAINST TRAMPLING INDIVIDUAL LIBERTIES. TO THEM, EVERY HUMAN LIFE IS SACRED. ...ONE HAS TO BE A HYPOCRITE TO UNDERSTAND MODERN DIPLOMACY AS THE UNITED STATES PRACTICES IT THESE DAYS. ... IT HAS BECOME SO THAT AMERICANS SHOULD BE EXPOSED NOW FOR WHAT THEIR PRINCIPAL CONCERN IN LIFE IS, THAT OF MAKING MONEY FOR THEMSELVES AND TO HELL WITH WHAT HAPPENS TO OTHER PEOPLE. TO THEM, WHAT MATTERS MOST IS THE ALMIGHTY DOLLAR -- IF YOU STILL DON'T KNOW IT. UNQUOTE.

6. TIMES JOURNAL FRONT-PAGE EDITORIAL OF FEBRUARY 22 (COMMENTING ON FOREIGN SECRETARY ROMULO'S SPEECH TO AMERICAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE - MANILA 2807): QUOTE: ...THE DECISIONS OF THIS COUNTRY'S LEADERS IN RECENT YEARS, STARTING WITH THE IMPOSITION OF MARTIAL LAW, COULD NOT HAVE BEEN PROMPTED BY OTHER THAN THE DESIRE TO SAVE THE NATION FROM SINKING IN THE MUCK OF A BRAND OF DEMOCRACY THAT EQUATED FREEDOM WITH LICENSE. DESPITE THIS, THE AMERICAN GOVERNMENT APPEARS BENT ON TELLING US WHAT IS GOOD FOR US, TO THE EXTENT OF TRYING TO

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DICTATE THE ROUTE WE HAVE TO TAKE IN OUR RETURN TO NORMALCY. ...WHILE WE BELIEVE IN THE VIRTUES OF THE SYSTEM INTRODUCED INTO THIS COUNTRY BY THE AMERICANS, WE ALSO BELIEVE THAT WE SHOULD BE FREE TO SHAPE IT TO CONFORM WITH OUR IDEALS, TRADITIONS AND STATE OF POLITICAL MATURITY. ... NO SOVEREIGN NATIONS, HOWEVER SMALL, SHOULD BROOK INTERFERENCE FROM ANOTHER, HOWEVER SPECIAL AND UNIQUE A PST RELATIONSHIP MIGHT HAVE BEEN. THE PHILIPPINES RIGHT NOW IS AN OUTSTANDING EXAMPLE.

UNQUOTE.

7. FRANCISCO DE LEON COLUMN IN TIMES JOURNAL FEBRUARY 20:
QUOTE: THE UNITED STATES LAST WEEK CONTRADICTED ITS OWN ENVOY
IN THE PHILIPPINES BY RELEASING ITS SCORE SHEET ON ALLEGED
HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATORS. WHILE AMBASSADOR DAVID D. NEWSOM WAS
REASSURING THE BISHIPS-BUSINESSMEN'S CONFERENCE ON HUMAN
DEVELOPMENT THE UNITED STATES HAD NO INTENTION OF BEING THE
WORLD'S SCORE-KEEPER OR POLICEMAN ON HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATORS
(MANILA 2447), THE STATE DEPARTMENT DID EXACTLY THE OPPOSITE.
IT SUBMITTED TO THE U.S. CONGRESS ITS OWN TALLYSHEET OF
ALLEGED HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATORS, CITING INDONESIA, TAIWAN,
SOUTH KOREA AND THE PHILIPPINES AMONG THOSE IN ASIA. ... THE
CONTRADICTIONS BETWEEN THE AMERICAN ENVOY'S STATEMENTS AND THOSE
OF THE STATE DEPARTMENT HAVE ONLY SUCCEEDED IN FURTHER CON-
FUSING MANY COUNTRIES ON THE U.S. PRESIDENT'S HUMAN RIGHTS
POLICIES. THEY ALSO PUT TO TEST NEWSOM'S CREDIBILITY AS A
SPOKESMAN OF HIS COUNTRY IN THE PHILIPPINES. ... REPORTS
QUOTING THE STATE DEPARTMENT SAID THAT, ALTHOUGH THE PHILI-
PPINES, TAIWAN, INDONESIA AND SOUTH KOREA WERE TAGGED AS ASIA'S
HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATORS, MILITARY SALES AND CREDIT TO THESE
STRATEGICALLY LOCATED COUNTRIES WOULD NOT BE SCRAPPED. ...
THE PHILIPPINES, HOWEVER, VIEWS WITH MORE CONCERN THE STATE
DEPARTMENT'S CHARGE THAN THE POSSIBLE REDUCTION OR SCRAPPING
OF U.S. AID. AS THE PHILIPPINE EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON, D.C.
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POINTED OUT, THERE WERE QUESTIONABLE CONCLUSIONS IN THE U.S.
REPORT. THE STATE DEPARTMENT PAPER WAS BASED ON REPORTS OF
PRIVATE ORGANIZATIONS LIKE THE AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL AND THE
INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION OF JURISTS, WHICH THE PHILIPPINE
EMBASSY SAID HAD CONDUCTED INQUIRIES "TO PROVIDE APPARENT
BASIS FOR PRECONCEIVED NOTIONS AS TO CONDITIONS IN THE
PHILIPPINES." WHY DID THE UNITED STATE GOVERNMENT RELY MORE
ON PRIVATE ORGANIZATIONS WHEN IT HAS ITS OWN SPECIALISTS IN
OR OUT OF ITS EMBASSY IN THE PHILIPPINES? THIS IS AN
INTRIGUING QUESTION. UNQUOTE. (COMMENT: DE LEON IS FORMER
COLUMNIST AND PUBLICITY DIRECTOR FOR LOPEZ FAMILY INTERESTS.
HE JOINED ROMUALDEZ' TIMES JOURNAL WHEN THEY TOOK OVER THE
LOPEZ' MANILA CHRONICLE AND OTHER HOLDINGS, BUT HAS CON-
SISTENTLY AVOIDED COMMENT ON DOMESTIC POLITICS. HE IS A
WEEKEND BILLIARD-PLAYING BUDDY OF JOVITO SALONGA.)

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EA ALSO FOR AMBASSADOR NEWSOM

8. EVENING POST FRONT-PAGE EDITORIAL FEBRUARY 22: QUOTE: A REPORT FROM WASHINGTON, D.C. THE OTHER WEEK ON A STATE DEPARTMENT ASSESSMENT OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION IN THE PHILIPPINES AND A NUMBER OF OTHER COUNTRIES, WHICH WAS A VARYING LEVEL OF GRIM, COULD HAVE COME STRAIGHT OUT OF AN NPA OR MNLF PROPAGANDA SHEET, OR FOR THAT MATTER FROM THE FILIPINO EXPATRIATE GUERRILLAS IN AMERICA -- SO ADDLED, SO OUT OF TOUCH WITH REALITY WAS IT. THE PHILIPPINE AMBASSADOR TO WASHINGTON WAS OF COURSE MOVED TO MAKE

A FORMAL NEGATION
OF THE REPORT, POINTING OUT PARTICULARLY THE PRECONCEIVED NOTIONS OF THE PRIVATE ORGANIZATIONS WHICH MADE A SURVEY IN THIS COUNTRY OBVIOUSLY MERELY TO JUSTIFY THESE NOTIONS AND NOT TO PINPOINT THE FACTS THAT EYESIGHT AND INTELLECT READILY APPREHENDED IN FAVOR OF THE PHILIPPINES, IF THERE WAS NOT SUCH AN IMPREGNABLE WALL OF PREJUDICE TO BOUNCE THE FACTS FROM. CURIOSLY, THE STATE DEPARTMENT REPRESENTATIVE WHO WAS QUERIED BY A CONGRESS SUBCOMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AID SEEMED TO QUALIFY MUCH OF THE ANTI-PHILIPPINES CHARGES IN THE REPORT, SAYING THAT CERTAIN SO-CALLED CRUEL TREATMENT OF DETAINEES WAS NOT A MATTER OF POLICY AND THAT CERTAIN
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SITUATIONS WERE TEMPORARY. HE ADDED THAT THE FORTHCOMING ELECTIONS OF MEMBERS OF THE INTERIM NATIONAL ASSEMBLY WAS A GOOD SIGN AND THAT NORMALIZATION, IN EFFECT, WOULD ERASE THE PHILIPPINES FROM THE LIST OF HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATORS, AS IF MERE TRANSITION FROM ONE SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT TO THAT OF A WESTERN TYPE DEMOCRACY WAS ENOUGH TO ANOINT A COUNTRY AND PEOPLE. ... ACTUALLY, THERE IS NO REASON TO FUME OVER

THE STATE DEPARTMENT REPORT, FOR ONE, IT IS DOUBTFUL THAT THE DEPARTMENT ITSELF TAKES IT SERIOUSLY. FOR ANOTHER, TIME AND AGAIN THE PRESENT ADMINISTRATION HAS CALLED ON THE PEOPLE TO RELY MORE ON SELF-SUFFICIENCY THAN ON DOLEOUTS AND SINCE THE REPORT HAS BEEN MADE IN CONNECTION WITH DELIBERATIONS ON U.S. AID, WE SHOULD NOT LOSE SLEEP OVER WHAT THE REPORT IMPLIES. UNQUOTE.

9. DAILY EXPRESS EDITORIAL FEBRUARY 23: QUOTE: NO MATTER HOW SUBTLY PERHAPS, AMERICAN PRESENCE IN THE INTERIM BATASANG PAMBANSA CAMPAIGN IS MORE AND MORE BEING FELT. ... WHAT IS DISCONCERTING IS THE NAGGING FEELING THAT AMERICAN SYMPATHY, IF NOT SUPPORT, IS NOW APPARENTLY BEING THROWN BEHIND THE OPPOSITION. ... THE CONCERTED CAMPAIGN TO DIS-CREDIT THE ADMINISTRATION, IN FACT, BEGAN LONG BEFORE THE CAMPAING. ... PERHAPS, AMERICAN POLITICAL STRATEGISTS HAVE SEEN IT FIT TO RIDE ON THE CURRENT CAMPAIGN TO DRUM UP THEIR ISSUES AGAINST THE ADMINISTRATION, THUS EXERTING PRESSURE ON THE LEADERSHIP TO TOE THE U.S. OINE. ... WE CANNOT BEGRUDGE THE UNITED STATES FOR BEING A BIT TOO INTERESTED IN POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS HERE, BUT THE WHITE HOUSE SHOULD BE REMINDED THAT THE BATASANG PAMBANSA ELECTION IS A PURELY INTERNAL AFFAIR. UNQUOTE.

10. GRANADA IN TIMES JOURNAL FEBRUARY 23: QUOTE: IT WAS TIME THE PHILIPPINE EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON REJECTED THE U.S. LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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STATE DEPARTMENT'S REPORT ON ALLEGED MASSIVE VIOLATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE PHILIPPINES. FOR THE REPORT IS POSSIBLY ONE OF THE MOST COCKEYED EVER SUBMITTED TO THE U.S. GOVERNMENT. THE REPORT WAS SUBMITTED BY ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS PAT DERIAN AFTER A COUPLE OR SO DAYS' STAY IN MANILA. AND THE BULK OF IT WA LIFTED FROM EARLIER REPORTS OF THE AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL AND THE INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION OF JURISTS. MS. DERIAN SIMPLY DID NOT OBSERVE THE REFORMS AFTER THE AI AND ICJ MADE THEIR REPORTS. SO THAT SHE CLAIMED AMONG OTHER THINGS, FOR INSTANCE, THAT THE HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION IN THE PHILIPPINES IS WORSE THAN IN SOUTH KOREA. AN OBSERVATION THAT IS A MASTERPIECE FOR ITS INACCURACY AND IRRESPONSIBILITY. UNQUOTE.
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